Reflections

From the Shadows

Vol 2 of 2

Poems of the External World

A COLLECTION OF POETRY BY

Caspian J. Karst

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Introduction

Though life is full of darkness,
Filled with shadows all around,
May these words give you light —
Knowing you are not alone.

Caspian J. Karst

Section I — Duty, Responsibility & Self-Sacrifice

Responsibility

The fresh dew of life —
Limited by imagination only,

Growing to be stately,
A pillar of strength,

Deeds heaved on my back —
As your beast of burden,

Head low below your yoke,
I took to the task at hand,

Through the mire I push —
Seeing your unburdened life,

Throwing clods in my face,
Scorning me in my agony,

Seeking justice in my inner tears,
While seeing their lifeless stare,

As the ages thicken my hide,
I march on for self and none other,

Knowing time shall unburden me,
My responsibility concluded.

The Forgotten Soul

From the pages of time,
Your voice travels to me,
Invoking me arise to duty,

I burst forth from my tomb,
Ready to serve justice,
And fight for the weak,

As the dust of death falls off,
Once again my armor gleams,
Ready to champion truth,

Screams draw me to the fray,
Standing as a shield before you,
Between you and the beast,

The battle commences in rage,
As each blow draws its blood,
I fall to the pain of evil,

Your words sustain my soul,
As my force drains from me,
My blood flowing freely,

Soon the final blow comes,
The cold death fills the air,
As you search through the smoke,

Until your victor emerges,
With your sweet words raining,
I limp towards your side,

You beckon to see beneath,
To show what is under the steel,
To look upon her angel,

My mask falls at your command,
I see the horror upon your face,

As you hide from my stare,

My heart understands the fear,
Accepting the scars of war,
I turn from your presence,

My will driving me forward,
Drifting back to whence I came,
The forgotten soul.

The Release

Flowing from one battle to the next,
Seeing only the next hill to climb,
A life solely focused on the goal,

As the landscape changes before you,
You clench to the hope of the past,
An anchor to a place you will return to,

Forging ahead into the storms,
Never looking back at what was,
Of the things left behind,

As you see a clearing in the horizon,
The war almost at its finality,
You breathe and finally glance back,

But the refuge you carried in memory,
The quiet place you swore you'd return to,
Time has stripped it from you as dust,

Only chaff remains of what once was,
The peace now scattered in the rubble,
Lost to the dark recesses of the heart,

In the aftermath you lay down the sword,
Dropping the weight of the armor,
Feeling the dawn of a new day before you,

The hands that once clenched in defiance,
Holding onto what shall never be again,
Letting go of the ghosts of the past,

As you look forward once more,
The sun in your face finally,
You go forward in the release.

Loop of Despair

Spinning me in circles,
Disorienting my mind,

You're never to blame,
A cog in the machine,

Words knotted together,
Tied with deadlines,

I scramble to obey,
To meet the demands,

As you reset the game,
Just following the rules,

To help me surrender,
In a loop of despair…

But I stand resolute,
Defiant to the core,

Knowing the truth,
Too stubborn to yield.

Drift in Peace

Bleeding with contempt,
I stand in defiance,

Unwilling to yield,
Unable to relent,

The heart consumed,
And the mind seared,

Collapsing in agony,
Resolute to the end,

As the last drop sheds,
Dust returning to dust,

Dispersed to the wind,
Free to drift in peace.

Knightly Cost

Lost within my mind,
Trying to understand,

I shred my psyche,
My soul split asunder,

With sheer willpower,
I rip a chasm inside,

Splitting the extremes,
Creating order from chaos,

Controlling the selfish self,
The stench of pleasure,

Seeking an inner peace,
To shed this turmoil,

But I find no balance,
In this inner storm,

Guarded by honor,
I must resist myself,

Never to be complete,
The duty of a knight.

The Fading Away

Born of the knight,
Destined to serve,
Resolute in purpose,

Fighting for justice,
Giving in truth,
Standing for the weak,

I give all that I can,
Every drop of life I have,
Until there is no more,

Like the dew of the morning,
I stand in the sunlight,
Awaiting the fading away.

The Forgotten

Under the gray sky —
Standing resolute,

A forgotten soul —
Consumed by duty,

Left alone broken —
Ready to serve.

Covered in Darkness

Aged Beyond my true years,
My soul weary and old,

Unable to change my ways,
Unwilling to yield to life,

I lock my heart deep within,
Trying to escape the emptiness,

Never entangling with strings,
Given all that I have freely,

My insides devoured whole,
Hanging my head to fate,

Wishing to find mercy,
A place of profound peace,

But shadowed by the grave,
A knight covered in darkness.

SECTION II — Oppression, Abuse & Power Structures

My Silent Revenge

You came into my life as a blessing,
An angel of comfort and peace,
Offering warmth and help I deeply need,

I never saw through your delicate words,
The ravenous desire in your eyes,
To take control of all that I am,

My spirit crushed under your visceral force,
The marrow draining from my soul,
Helpless under your suffocating embrace,

The reins of life ripped from my hands,
You steer my life on your whim,
As whispers for mercy drip from my lips,

I escape into the darkness of my defiance,
Becoming nothing you can find,
Seeking reclamation of self,

Reaching from my internal grave,
The fight for justice for the weak,
Grasping the power you have stolen,

You gnash in bitter anger at the blows,
Seeking in vain the source of the attack,
In my silent revenge.

The Bitter Truth

Entering life from the womb,
My feet set on the narrow path,

Like fresh dew upon my eyes,
I see the fullness of life,

But a cloud arises ahead,
A dark and loathsome spirit,

Coming as a tormentor of truth,
Justice a byword of convenience,

Your shadow is all consuming,
Wishing to twist my soul asunder,

As I wither and break before you,
My hope falling as leaves,

Choosing to face your coldness,
Defying all that you desire,

Holding to the forgotten good,
I slowly crumble to your rage,

Standing changed forever,
Alone on the hill of endurance,
Knowing the bitter truth of life.

The Grey

I am your guide to the unknown,
Here to lead you into the dark,
Blinding your senses to all reason,

Using my craft to charm you,
My words spinning in your mind,
Twisting you tighter in my web of red,

Tangled in the bureaucracy of rules,
Watching you sink with quiet delight,
As hope is strangled from your soul,

You claw to escape from my clutches,
But as sand I shift under your weight,
Dragging you deeper into my world,

Screaming in your tormented mind,
Struggling to break the bonds to freedom,
I leave you with less than you had,

As you break free from the cruelty,
You shiver in the ache of your spirit,
Asking where the compassion was,

I trace over the black and white,
Hissing as I read the fine print aloud,
I must always remain in the grey.

Something to Use

My dream of you taken by time,
Melting as the candle does,
Leaving a void in my soul,

Fragile and innocent you came,
A child born of my lineage,
Restoring a glimmer of hope,

Watching you mature before me,
Each step stronger than the last,
The pride of a parent warms me,

But so many voices taught you,
To take all you desire with no care,
A birthright to have no remorse,

Twisting your words into my soul,
Stained by the lies you spun so well,
All willfully blinded by your charm,

Slowly descending into the void,
My skills the only part you cherished,
Always there to fix what you did,

As you start to learn to fly alone,
I struggle to show you the truth,
But my words have no weight,

Burning my name as you leave,
Saying my love is a cruel burden,
Wrapping me in your lies,

I pull myself from the ruins,
Pondering my worthlessness,
Am I anything but something to use?

Prey for Honor

A lie cloaked in promises,
Wrapped in the flag,

Meant to serve the heroes,
There to give them honor,

Your actions full of red tape,
And words full of craft,

Tangling victims in rules,
Suffocating them in paper,

Even though some gave all,
None came home whole,

Death being your greatest ally,
Looping them in despair,

Taking what little they have,
Draining the remaining hope,

Waiting as the vultures you are,
Circling your prey until they die.

The Dominion

You profess to be our ally,
To stand for our rights,

Giving us beautiful words,
What we want to hear,

Twisting words so elegantly,
Lies birthed into truth,

Drunk with absolute power,
Squeezing the joy from life,

With laws you justify,
Draining our marrows,

As you hollow us like a reed,
For the delight of status,

To stand on our broken backs,
Offering the crumbs that fall,

As we cry for mercy,
You sneer with delight,

That we are to blame...
We gave you the dominion.

Unethically Clean

Covered in white glory,
Endowed with blind trust,
Licensed to do no harm,

An ego based on craft,
Trusted to do right,
Word above reproach,

A butcher of bodies,
Hands stained in deceit,
Souls drained for greed,

Bathed in self purity,
The facts dissolved,
Only your truth remains,

None refute your truth,
Covered by unethical review,
A gentle rebuke is given,

Washed of all atrocities,
Free to serve again,
To leave others in pain.

Your Fear

Cloaked in vengeance,
A heart dipped in darkness,
Seeking the light of justice,

Untethered by the gray,
I hide in the shadows,
Unknown to you,

Striking with righteous fear,
Here to reveal the evil,
Dragging it to the light,

May you fear the night,
The things you cannot see,
Where no trick can save you,

For here I await you,
The moral compass,
Your unwanted conscience.

Your Truth

Slithering into my life,
Desperate for my help,

Offering me cheap praises,
To fool me into service,

But I give of a free heart,
With no strings attached,

My hands working hard,
As I fix what you cannot,

Your lips ooze sweet vows,
To give my kindness back,

But I know the cruel reality,
Your words are void of truth,

My heart shudders for you,
Knowing this is how you live,

That nothing is giving freely,
From the goodness of ones heart,

That this cruel game you play,
Is the truth of your life.

SECTION III — Social Commentary & Cultural Decay

Sand Through the Fingers

Like an hourglass,
You watch the sands of time,

Believing there is always plenty,
There are always spare moments,

Grain by grain it pours through,
Deceiving yourself that each one is minor,

Looking at the mound grow —
Your heart sinks into despair,

No way to replace the fragments,
That have passed before your eyes,

As you grab helplessly —
The sand slips through your fingers.

Love of the Shallow

As I pass through this world,
Watching their souls unravel,

The actions of the masses…
Paint a grim reality,

How they twist their words —
Weaving a false narrative,

In stolen virtue they hunt,
Consuming all they snare,

Where nothing is ever enough…
An endless hunger,

Seeing the lust in their greed,
No care in who they harm,

Where everything has a price…
Nothing given without strings,

How I wish I could help them…
To restore their humanity,

Blinded by their own desires,
None can see the emptiness,

My heart crumbles for the lost,
Those that love in the shallow.

Give More

So many in self darkness,
A life lived for vanity,

Giving nothing of value,
Leeches on societies blood,

No soul to understand,
Humanity valueless to them,

How bitter their life is,
Not knowing the simple truth,

That to be truly rich within,
You give more than you take.

Kind Words

The unholy dance of life,
Forced lie against your heart,

Never expressing the truth,
Knowing you must play along,

Truth kept from the gatekeepers,
As righteousness twists inside,

Covered by a false smile,
To flatter a fragile ego,

To get what you are owed —
Hidden behind kind words.

True Equality

As I pass through this world,
Learning life's cold facts,

I yearn to pass on this gift,
One most are blind to see,

That we all struggle to live,
Wishing to be seen as more,

But as we demand our justice,
Give to others what you lack,

For true change starts within,
From a place void of strings,

Restoring humanity to all,
Finally seeing our true equality.

The Truth of Life

Seeing the path life has laid,
What it has done to all,

I see what some do not…
None live without pain,

A gift of bitterness,
Wrapped in a choice,

Blinding yourself to facts…
There are only two paths,

To spread the hurt to all,
False justice for yourself,

Or be the one that stands…
For what you know is right,

To be the change we need,
Facing the truth of life.

To Grow

You pander to my kindness,
In need of what I have,

I yield to the sadness,
Giving from the heart,

The words given in praise,
Just in time to save you,

Then the twist to my soul,
As I hear all that you do,

Your words paint the truth,
A life lived beyond means,

Never looking to the future,
To see fate is kind to none,

My words fail to reach you,
A warning to look forward,

Knowing I must release you,
So you may learn to grow.

The World

I am foreign to your ways,
Not willing to bend morals,
To live in the gray of life,

Attacking from every angle,
An attempt to change me,
To blend me into the noise,

Watching your legions obey,
My soul holds to the light,
Showing only black and white,

Unwilling to succumb to you,
I shall stand in defiance,
No matter the cost to self,

I shall fight the good fight,
Until the last breath,
Against the world.

The Greed of More

Close to the season of giving,
I seek what no store can have,

Diving deep into my soul…
In search for what to give,

The desire to share the past,
And the warmth I remember,

To pass the joy forward...
A tradition made from will,

Of joining pieces together,
Bringing a dream before you,

A part of my heart to share,
Not something simply bought,

The glimmer in your eyes,
As paper flies to the ground,

Hoping the value is known,
My heart swells in warmth,

But you cast my heart aside,
Disposed of with no care,

My hope reduced to ruin…
For the greed of more.

Hollow Echoes

My weary eyes behold the truth,
Gone are the days of true grit,
Pain driving you to climb higher,

A push to grow in all richness,
Planting roots deeply in reality,
Knowing storms shall come,

Yet my soul weeps for the future —
Where we are fragile snowflakes,
And words are twisted into hate,

Throwing blame on the world,
Scared to face the reflection,
The inner shame they created,

Is integrity just a hope now —
Shall this be our world's diluted fate —
Leaving nothing but hollow echoes.

Frenzied

Like wild beasts,
Running to and fro,

No inner control,
Filled with defiance,

Spoiled in apathy,
Given to excess,

Excuses flowing,
The parents whine,

Ignoring the truth,
Unable to correct,

As they yield,
Feeding their growth.

Money

I am all you desire to have,
Consuming your very soul,

Alluring you to lie for me,
To cheat for my comfort,

None are immune to me,
How I bask in my charm,

To twist the most selfless,
Hoarding me endlessly,

Chasing more than needed,
How foolish is your lust,

A life wasted for rags,
Smiling pieces of paper.

No Morality

Finding no fault in yourself,
A perpetual helpless victim,

Twisting words for gain,
A broken moral compass,

Theft hidden in need,
Rationalizing all wrongs,

Blinded by your greed,
Honesty a bygone word.

Omitted Honesty

With an honest smile,
You spin your craft,

Slicing words to ribbons,
Picking your narrative,

Twisting truth with ease,
You omit the honesty,

Thinking I am easy prey,
Ready for the slaughter,

I break your illusion,
Burning away your lies,

Left exposed to the light,
You squirm and stutter,

Unwilling to relent,
You slither off defeated.

Death of Discernment

Disjointed and incomplete,
Slopping words around,

Crudely saying what I feel,
Leaving nothing to mystery,

As the flies collect around,
People gather at the trough,

With no thought in mind,
They swallow the swill,

As they praise the flavor,
While begging for seconds.

Cold Reality

Gone are the selfless —
Followers of truth,

Diluted by desires,
No rules to obey,

Living vacuously,
No grasp on reality,

Racing to nowhere,
No care for others,

A cold existence,
One of destruction.

No More Words

A web spun to delight,
An expression of soul,

Eloquent in its simplicity,
Distilled in brevity,

With stones in hand,
You ignore the journey,

In self-righteous vigor,
You seek hidden fault,

Flaying my words,
Stripping the richness,

Where variety is evil,
And understanding is vile,

Using fear to control,
You demand a change,

A life of conformity,
Of whitewashed words.

No Soul

Controlled by their status,
Brainwashed by their words,

You mindlessly obey,
Obedient to their will,

Blind to your blindness,
Following wherever led,

Identity in belonging,
Shorn clean of self,

Willingly led to slaughter,
With no soul left inside.

Tightrope

Balancing your life,
Trying to stay center,

Precariously perched,
Between two beasts,

Both ready to devour,
To twist your heart,

One lusting for power,
To harm without care,

One masked in virtue,
But equally selfish,

Though weary of life,
Wishing to let go,

You know the truth of life,
That it is a tightrope —
Not a two-sided war.

Unburdened Consequences

A world lost in chaos,
Where justice is sold,

Darkness becomes the light,
To hide the rotten decay,

A people drunk on greed,
Living to consume souls,

Unburdened by good will,
Beasts of self-pleasure,

Hope screams in agony,
As it is flayed alive,

Shall we ever seek good,
What is being lost,

Or shall we all devour,
To eat or be eaten...

The Darkness

You traipse around with a cloud,
A misery misunderstood by all,

Covering yourself in tragedy,
Convinced none can grasp you,

As you bathe in the abyss,
Professing your brooding,

Diving deeper into the void,
Thinking you understand it all,

As it wraps you in its grasp,
You finally feel the truth,

What you sought as an identity,
Is far darker than you can be,

It strangles your blood from you,
Leaving you in fear of the darkness.

Synced Out

Consumed to the bone,
A soul left empty,

Tears drained to ashes,
Hope reduced to dreams,

The heart in a grave,
Wishing for renewal,

Seeking peace within,
Comfort with another,

Unwilling to change,
To bend the character,

Only the truth left,
A being out of sync.

Twisted

All I say is not what it means,
I pick the right words for intent,

I take you around and around —
Never going straight,

You try to understand me —
But there is nothing to know,

Like the lamb I am not —
You misread all I do,

I take the truth and turn it back —
Nothing is my fault,

The harder you try to think,
The easier it is to win,

I will not give you clarity —
The truth is unknown to me,

I am the hero of my calamity —
For all that I do and say —
Is twisted.

Grandiose

Like a magic wand,
Covering who you are,

Your ego stroked softly,
Fueled by false praise,

On a self-made pedestal,
A delusional grandeur,

Bloated with vanity,
An inflated reality,

You ride too high,
On your selfish pride,

A nose held high,
Unable to be humble,

Left alone in wonder,
Unable to see yourself.

SECTION IV — Strength, Honor & Heroism

The Phoenix

The ground beneath me shakes,
Moving out of its place,
Toppling down all I know,

I run from the destruction you give,
Seeking refuge in the chaos,
But you surround me absolute,

I stand with my head down,
Seeing the impending doom,
Resolved to the facts before me,

The flames lick at my soul,
As I scream for mercy,
You char my being crisp,

With delight, you burn me asunder,
Destroying what you hate,
Watching me succumb to all your bitterness,

Though consumed completely,
I shall arise from the ashes,
Renewed like the phoenix.

I Shall Stand

Holding my head in my hands,
Feeling the weight of life on me,

I look at the bitterness of truth,
And the numbness it has left me,

Seeking where the soul has gone,
Wondering why the tears won't come,

Not knowing when the spirit left,
Or why this is all that remains,

My heart yearns to break in sorrow,
But you cannot shatter dust,

Seeing the aftermath before me,
I stand resolute in my choices,

I follow the path of the hero I was,
Refusing to be the beast of the world,

I trek to my final duty set before me,
With clarity in who I shall be,

Giving what I cannot spare to all,
Telling them there is plenty left,

Until the final day of life,
I shall stand.

The Best in Us

At my first breath of life,
The hate was born in you,

Beating me to the ground,
The delight fills your eyes,

As you smile down on me,
Daring me to stand again,

Reaching for your mercy,
You kick my hand away,

Finally seeing the truth,
No one is there to help,

In defiance will I stand,
Enduring your blows,

I push through the pain,
Being the change in life,

Striving to grow stronger,
To show the best in us all.

Fragments of a Man

Knowing where I am from,
A soul from another time,
The heartbeat of a knight,

Standing for what is right…
Where justice is always true,
And light defeats the darkness,

Striving against the world…
I slipped so many times,
Losing so much of myself,

The battles eroding my soul,
Seeing the truth all around…
That serpents rule this world,

How many times I let go…
Swept away in this current —
But I must stand as I am,

As the pieces fall from me…
I do not know who I am now,
Caught between two truths,

Knowing I do not belong here…
But that I cannot leave either,
Wishing for a sliver of peace,

I resign myself to my fate…
To fall apart slowly with time,
Leaving only fragments of a man.

Void of Knights

Through the darkness of life,
A hero arises from the ashes,

To stand for your cause,
Giving his shield to you,

Until the last foe is gone,
The victory at hand,

Turning with heart in hand,
Left broken by the fight,

Your sirens song of love,
Drawing him to your arms,

Fate sealed by your hands,
The true danger unknown,

Your words piercing his soul,
A dagger he can not remove,

His eyes asking you why,
As he bleeds before you,

Dying to the greatest beast,
One that preys on the kind,

Until all are consumed,
In a world void of knights.

Integrity

Raised to be more,
Striving to grow tall,

Weighing what is true,
To do what is right,

Taking no shortcuts,
No easy way out,

As I slowly dissolve,
Dying with integrity.

Unwavering Strength

Polished and refined,
A gentleman in deed,

Cloaked in boyish charm,
An unattainable mystery,

With a debonair smile,
My words lull you,

Drawn by the strength,
An unwavering steadiness,

Melting at my touch,
I know what to do,

Your eyes wide open,
Seduced by my ways,

I lead you to safety,
Keeping you from harm.

Beast of Love

Where darkness rules absolute,
And evil stalks the soul,

Seeking your warm blood,
To drain you into despair,

You try to escape its hold,
As you feel it draw nigh,

Cornered without hope,
It pierces you with a stare,

Savoring the fear you drip,
A snarl of delight escapes,

As you relent to the doom,
Ready for the consumption,

Suddenly pulled from harm,
A gnarled beast before you,

It strikes in your defense,
A barrier from the injustice,

With your protector's last breath,
Sacrificed for your safety,

Laying lifeless before you,
The darkness driven away,

As pity fills your tears,
Washing the wounds away,

The beauty within revealed,
But too late to cherish.

Forever

I stand before you —
In truth and honor,

Giving all I have within,
To protect you forever.

Unwavering

Nothing more to bleed,
My heart a cold grave,

Unwilling to change,
To yield to false peace,

I shall die in truth,
An unwavering knight.

SECTION V — Humor & Lighthearted Pieces

My Sweet Desire

My darkest desire,
No redeeming good,

A delightful sin,
With no benefit,

But I crave you,
A consuming need,

I shiver in pleasure,
My blood chilled,

Devouring you slowly,
Every bite my last,

As I hit the bottom,
Finding your love gone,

Hating what happened,
I throw you away,

Eyeing the freezer,
I ponder the next victim.

You Brew Me

Cracking my eyes,
Seeing a new day,

I seek your comfort,
As I grasp you close,

Your scent teases,
My desire grows,

Turning clear to black,
A brew of intensity,

From hot to cold —
I enjoy your variety,

As I take you in,
I sigh in comfort,

If only you were alive —
I would marry you.

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